

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 021043Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7154

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 10291

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, VS, CB, ENRG

SUBJ: GVN/GKR DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE AREAS

REF: A) CARACAS 7253

B) SAIGON 9520

C) SAIGON 9988

1. ON AUGUST 2, MINISTER OF INDUSTRY WHO IS PRESENTLY
RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING GKR POLICY WITH RESPECT TO THE
DISPUTED OFFSHORE AOIL PROBLEM (DESCRIBED REFS B AND C), GAVE
EMBASSY OFFICER A DETAILED EXPOSITION OF THE GKR POSITION.
SUBSTANCE OF IT IS THAT IT WAS GVN, NOT GKR, WHICH SUGGESTED
DIVIDING LINE MIDWAY BETWEEN GKR-OCCUPIED POULO WAI AND
GVN-OCCUPIED HON PAJANG (REFTEL B). THE GKR CLAIMS THAT
THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ISLANDS IS INDEED AT STAKE, THAT HON
PAJANG IS KHMER DESPITE GVN DE FACTO OCCUPATION BUT
THAT IN ANY CASE THESE MATTERS ARE OPEN TO DISCUSSION.
ACCORDINGLY, THE GKR HAD PROPOSED AS AN ALTERNATIVE,
THROUGH MANGUY OF ELF-ERAP, THE LINE THREE-QUARTERS
OF THE DISTANCE TO HON PAJANG (REFTEL B). ACCORDING
TO THE MINISTER, THE GVN REJECTED THIS OFFER AND HAS
CONDITIONED FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE PRIOR ACCEPT-
ANCE OF ITS LINE. THIS PRECONDITION IS UNACCEPTABLE
TO THE GKR. FURTHERMORE, THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE
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AMBASSADOR IN PHNOM PENH, WHEN CALLED IN ON THE MATTER,

IN EFFECT TURNED OFF FURTHER DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT
THEREIS NO OIL INVOLVED AND THUS NO PROBLEM EXISTS.

2. THE MINISTER SAID THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THE
EVENTUAL DECISIONS AND LINE-DRAWINGS MIGHT BE (AND HE
INTIMATED THAT THE GKR REALIZED CERTAIN CONCESSIONS ON
ITS PART WOULD BE INEVITABLE), THE ACTIVITIES BY THE
DRILLSHIP GLOMAR IV (REFTEL C) WERE BEING CARRIED OUT
IN AREAS ALWAYS AGREED TO BE UNDER GKR CONTROL, WELL
NORTH OF THE LINE SUGGESTED BY THE GVN ITSELF. THUS
THE GKR IS UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE GVN HARASSED
GLOMAR IV WITH ITS NAVAL VESSELS.

3. THE SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE FACT
THAT GLOMAR IV IS SCHEDULED TO RESUME OPERATIONS ON
AUGUST 4 AND THAT BY AUGUST 25 THE RESULTS OF ITS
EXPLORATIONS WILL BE KNOWN. THE SHIP HAS BEEN CON-
TRACTED ELSEWHERE AFTER AUGUST 25, SO THE WORK MUST
BE COMPLETED NOW OR NOT DONE AT ALL, ACCORDING TO THE
MINISTER.

4. THE GKR IS EVIDENTLY QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT A
POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION WITH THE GVN. APPROPRIATE
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE BEING CONSULTED, HIGH RANK-
ING PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN AND
ULTIMATELY THE MARSHAL, WHO HAS BEEN KEPT INFORMED
THROUGHOUT, WILL DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION. THIS
DECISION, ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, MIGHT BE MADE
AUGUST 2.

5. THE MINISTER ASKED IF THE EMBASSY COULD INTERVENE
WITH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO ENSURE THAT GVN
NAVAL VESSELS DO NOT INTERFERE FURTHER WITH THE DRILL-
SHIP WHEN IT RECOMMENCES OPERATIONS. THE EMBASSY
OFFICER STRESSED THAT THIS WAS A MATTER BETWEEN THE
TWO GOVERNMENTS, MUST BE RESOLVED BY THEM AND THAT WE
CANNOT GET INVOLVED. HE DID POINT OUT SEVERAL TIMES
TO THE MINISTER THAT THE "NEGOTIATIONS" THUS FAR ON
THE KHMER SIDE HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED BY MANGUY AND
THAT IT WOULD SEEM TO BE HIGH TIME FOR THE GKR ITSELF,
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IN PHNOM PENH OR THROUGH ITS EMBASSY IN SAIGON, TO
MAKE MORE OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH THE GVN. THE MINISTER
SAID THIS WOULD BE DONE AFTER THE MARSHAL HAS MADE HIS
DECISION. COMMENT: THE GKR HAS NOT HANDLED THIS
MATTER VERY WELL, AND WE SUSPECT THAT THERE MAY BE
SOME CONFUSION ON CERTAIN POINTS BECAUSE MANGUY, RATHER
THAN A GKR OFFICIAL, HAS DONE MOST OF THE TALKING WITH
THE GVN. HOWEVER, WE ALSO HAVE THE CLEAR IMPRESSION,

BASED ON TALKS WITH THE MINISTER AND MFA OFFICIALS, THAT THE GKR BELIEVES THAT THE GVN IS TAKING AN INCREASINGLY RIGID AND BELLIGERENT POSITION ON THIS WHOLE SUBJECT. THEY CITE, NOT ONLY THE GVN THREATENING GESTURES TOWARD THE DRILLSHIP, BUT ALLEGEDLY BELICOSE GVN DECLARATIONS AT THE LOS CONFERENCE WHICH FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM WAS COMPELLED TO REBUT.

7. ALTHOUGH THE GKR IS PRESSING FOR EMBASSY ASSISTANCE, WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS IS THEIR AFFAIR AND THAT KHMER THEMSELVES SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO PRESENT THEIR CASE MORE EFFECTIVELY TO THE GVN THAN THEY HAVE DONE HERETOFORE.

DEAN

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